



ASSET PROFILE

Issue Area: Youth Development

Detroit's youth are significantly challenged by social issues such as violence, crime, alcohol and substance abuse, unemployment, inadequate parental support and inadequate education. Mirroring the city, the same issues impact Cluster 8 neighborhoods, challenging their commitment and capacity to support the varied needs of youth. Cluster 8 focus group participants expressed concern about the lack of sufficient role models to guide youth through the challenging stage of adolescence and young adulthood. Consequently, many youth, frustrated by the lack of youth programs and activities, turn to "hanging out" in gangs and other high risk activities. They also become disenfranchised from the neighborhood because there are seldom places within walking distance where they can participate in youth oriented activities. Accordingly, youth development becomes a compelling concern in the context of community building and reinvestment. Investments in the creation and enhancement of neighborhood-based youth and family support programs, summer programs, health education/services, mentoring programs and job training opportunities are critical to strengthening the capacity of youth to live healthy, safe and productive lives.

The listing of youth serving agencies/programs included in this section provides a brief narrative of those based in or serving the Cluster. The listing serves as basis for building youth development opportunities.

Current Youth Development Conditions

The 1990 Census indicates that 31.9 percent (31,236) of the total population (97,940) of Cluster 8 is under 18 years of age. This represents more than a third of the Cluster's population. Cluster 8 is served by the Area C office of the Detroit Public Schools (see organizational profile for school listing). Sixty-four percent (21,285) of the Cluster's youth were enrolled in elementary or high school during the 1990 Census. Youth in Cluster 8 live in middle and low income neighborhoods. The majority of families (66.5 percent) living in the neighborhoods have incomes between \$15,000 and \$74,999. Family economic status often determines the capacity of families to provide youth with a variety of recreational experiences in and out of the cluster.

The Brightmoor subcommunity residents have expressed a significant concern for the well-being and future of their youth. On a daily basis they witness children and youth working against oppressive social conditions such a drugs, alcohol abuse, poverty and academic deficiency. According to the "Bright Futures for Brightmoor" plan, children and youth in the Brightmoor community number 7,139 or 37 percent of all residents. More than



a third of Brightmoor's children live in single parent households. Of the communities 4,665 households, single men headed seven percent of all households and females headed 28 percent. Twenty two percent of families lived below the poverty line in 1989. In 1993, sixty-seven percent of all births in Brightmoor's health area were to single parents.

Youth Programs/Services

Human Service Agencies

There are three major human service organizations located in the cluster that provide youth development opportunities, activities and services. The Brightmoor Community Center, Detroit Brightmoor Corps Community Center (Salvation Army) and the Northwestern YMCA, all UWCS member agencies, serve young children and adolescents year round.

The Brightmoor Community Center is located on Burt Road at Lyndon. The center was established in 1923 to meet the social, emotional and community needs of the residents of Brightmoor. The center has a strong commitment to providing on-site as well school-based programs that nurture, guide and support the development of youth. Youth services include, summer day camp, and on-site programs, tutoring, modern and African dance, BABES (school-based alcohol prevention) and group counseling in area schools. Additionally, the Center through a Skillman Foundation grant offer baby-sitting training.

The Northwestern YMCA, located at West Seven Mile Rd. and Lahser, serves Cluster 8 and surrounding communities. The branch provides leisure and self-development programs aimed at the coordinated development of spirit, mind and body. The family-based center is committed to working with the total family by offering respite programs for parents, as well as exercise and recreational activities for parents and children. The branch has an after-school and latch key program that includes tutoring and recreation for grades K - 7. As with other branches, the Northwestern YMCA has expanded their latchkey program to include transportation to 11 schools. Based on crime studies the majority of juvenile crime occurs in the first hour after school. In light of this the branch is committed to providing quality after-school programs to keep youth off the streets and in productive, enriching activities.

The Detroit Brightmoor Corps Community Center, located on Burgess near Fenkell, provides year round activities for area youth. The Community Center provides after-schools programs with table games and crafts, as well as a basketball team that plays in the Center gym. Summer camp is available for families as well as mothers and their children, age 12 and under.



Other youth development agencies located in or serving the Cluster are:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Detroit's mission is to strengthen family life of one-parent households by providing professional and volunteer services focused on the needs of children in those families. The agency has established the Detroit Mentoring Institute to offer workshop seminars to strengthen mentoring programs throughout metropolitan Detroit. The purpose of the Institute is to serve as a mentoring resource center for corporations/businesses and community organizations and churches in Metro Detroit. The Institute assists these groups with establishing and maintaining their own mentoring programs. The availability of mentoring programs for at-risk youth was a key youth development recommendations. The Institute should extend its outreach to neighborhood groups in Cluster 6 interested in mentoring.

Boy Scouts of America – Detroit Area Council's mission is to build desirable qualities of character, citizenship, and personal fitness in youth. Programs include Tiger Clubs (boys age 7); Cub Scouting (boys ages 8-10); Boy Scouts (boys ages 11-18); and Exploring (male and female youth ages 14-20). The Explorers focus on the critical age group of 14 –20 is consistent with the recommendation of the Cluster Board to create more mentoring and guidance programs, particularly for this age group. Each group offers leadership development, recreation, camping and leisure activities for youth. The Boy Scouts - Detroit Area Council has several active groups located in the Cluster.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. – Michigan Metro Council's mission is to make a significant positive impact on the lives of girls throughout the service area, emphasizing critical life skills, contemporary issues, girl planning, and decision making, pluralism, community service, self-esteem, career development and leadership, based on Girl Scout Promise and law, and guided by well-trained adult volunteers. The Girl Scouts serve girls ages 5 – 17. The Council offers camping services, cultural enrichment, leisure services, literacy instruction, mentoring, leadership development, prevention programs and substance abuse education services.

Health Services

Focus group participants cited the absence of Cluster-based health care facilities to serve the needs of youth. Adolescent health care services help to ensure that youth maintain optimal physical health and through health education to establish healthy lifestyles. The Detroit Medical Center Grace Hospital, a major health care facility near the area, provides pediatric services. Traditional health services for youth are available through existing health care facilities, however, it is nontraditional facilities, such as school-based health centers that provide on-site accessible adolescent care and education. Currently the cluster has no school-based centers. The Detroit Health



Department serves the area through the Grace Ross Clinic located on Greenfield and Lyndon. The center offers affordable health care, however, it is a considerable distance for youth to travel.

Health promotion is another concern of cluster residents. Cluster board members suggested that businesses and neighborhood groups work together to promote health and nutrition messages throughout the community. Another youth recommendation speaks to building upon computer technology and a vast range of programs designed to promote healthy lifestyles. Kiosks programmed with healthy messages and information can provide interactive use while increasing awareness of available services and healthy lifestyles. As evidence of their commitment to the community health care facilities, and local businesses could work with area high schools and middle schools to finance the placement of kiosks in the schools as well as other frequented locations.

Neighborhood Associations

Neighborhood associations are a strong asset of Cluster 8 as evidenced by the clusters' organizational profile. However, only a few of these organizations describe youth-oriented activities as part of their ongoing activities. *"The Eye" Neighborhood Association* provides youth with constructive summer activities. The association sponsors the "Kids in Sports Stay Out of Courts" program, a softball league of 11 teams for 6 - 16 year olds, and holds a picnic in early September to celebrate the end of the season.

Redford Gardens Community Association has a major focus on planning events for the area's children. The annual Halloween party held on a vacant lot attracts 600 - 700 children and parents for food and games. Each July, the "Party in the Park" attracts families and individuals, typically 400 or more from all over northwest Detroit for games, sports, and food. *Trinity Community Development Center* provides economically disadvantaged youth and their parents an opportunity to acquire higher order thinking skills and the academic support necessary to successfully complete school requirements. During the summer the Center runs six to eight week summer programs for neighborhood youth. The programs include a variety of activities designed to build character, cultural awareness, academic skills and leadership.

Focus group participants acknowledged that a lack of information about existing programs and funding may contribute to the limited number of ongoing neighborhood sponsored youth programs. The proposed "Community Development Teams" cited in the Cluster recommendations could serve as a clearinghouse for information and resources on youth services, activities and programs in the Cluster. The teams could also serve as a liaison between outside resources and neighborhood groups seeking assistance with developing youth programs.



CLUSTER

Recreational Facilities

The prevalence of recreational facilities such as parks, playfields and playlots in Cluster 8 are viable community building tools. The restoration of parks and recreation centers for youth and family use is an excellent “bridge-builder” to connect the local park and its neighborhood partners with a wide variety of resources located in and out of the immediate community. (See Recreation and Parks Map next page.)

The cluster is home to the Crowell Recreation Center of the City of Detroit Recreation Department located on Lahser near Puritain. The cluster has numerous small parks and several large parks such as Stopel, Eliza Howell and O’Hair Memorial Park. The Pistons Palace Foundation Park Program has targeted three of the parks, Stopel, Riordan, and Optimist Stout, for renovation. The program is designed to empower residents to take ownership of the park, identify needed renovations/redesign, and build ongoing community support for the parks.